

## EIS RATZON – CHARITY AND KINDNESS

Despite his financial difficulties, Chaim had gone to Shul (synagogue) to pray. In the doorway stood a skinny, middle-aged man in a weather-beaten hat and coat. “*Some tzedakah (charity)?*” the man asked. Chaim’s first impulse was to say, “*What, are you kidding?*” But he didn’t. He looked at the man and thought to himself, “*Well, at least I still have a job and an income.*” He reached into his pocket and gave the man a dollar. “*Be well,*” he told the collector. “*The Almighty should help and things should get netter.*” Then Chaim went inside to pray.

According to one rabbinic source, Chaim has done exactly the right thing to ensure his own prayers for his situation find a favorable response in Heaven. The rabbinic source states that charity given before prayer serves as an “advocate between himself and his Father in Heaven,” ensuring that his prayers are accepted.

Certainly, if one is to fill himself with the feeling that he is going to stand before the King when he prays, giving a gift would be a proper means of preparation. The finest gift in the Almighty’s eyes is an act of kindness toward one of His children.

A sage summed up the entire concept of empowering one’s prayers through kindness to others with his recommendation that a person precede his prayers by accepting on himself the mitzvah, “*V’ahavta l’rei’acha kamocho – Love your fellow as you love yourself.*”

### POINTS TO PONDER

***Giving charity before praying makes the prayer more acceptable in Heaven.***

***The Midrash states that “one who bestows kindness, his prayers are heard.”***

***Psalm 54:2 O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth. (ESV)***